ORIGINAL EC COMICS FROM THE 1950s!

TERROR

TALES FROM THE CRYPT®

NO. 11
MAR

2.00
2.75
CANADA

FEATURING...

THE CRYPT-KEEPER

THE OLD WITCH

THE VAULT-KEEPER

ACT III
SCENE 2

WOOD

THE CRYPT OF TERROR

HEH, HEH! SO YOU'RE BACK FOR *MORE*, EH? SO YOU LIKE *HORROR STORIES*, EH? WELL, *I'VE* GOT A LITTLE TALE ABOUT *PEOPLE WHO LIKE HORROR* THAT WILL *WARM* YOUR *COLD HEARTS!* YES, IT'S *ME*... *THE CRYPT-KEEPER*... YOUR HOST IN *THE CRYPT OF TERROR!* COME IN! JUST DRAG OVER THAT BURLAP SACK AND SIT DOWN! IT'S NICE AND *SOFT!* THE *CORPSE* IN IT ISN'T QUITE *STIFF* YET! COMFY? GOOD! NOW LISTEN TO THE *TERROR-TALE* I CALL...

WELL-COOKED HAMS!

SCANNED BY TATO

THE WILD LOOKING MAN'S STRONG FINGERS CLOSED ON THE HUNCHBACK'S THROAT! SUDDENLY HE SCREAMED IN PAIN! THE HUNCHBACK HAD FLUNG THE CONTENTS OF THE ACID BOTTLE INTO HIS FACE...
YAAAAAH
SHRIEKING HYSTERICALLY, THE SHAGGY ONE PLUNGED THE HUNCHBACK'S FACE DOWN UPON THE GLOWING TOP OF THE RED-HOT STOVE! THE HUNCHBACK HOWLED! A HISSING SOUND WAS HEARD AND A CLOUD OF SMOKE AROSE FROM THE BURNING FLESH...
EEEEEE
SUDDENLY THE GORY SCENE WAS BLOTTED OUT BY A FLASH OF RED VELVET AS THE CURTAINS CLOSED! A GASP ERUPTED FROM THE SHOCKED AUDIENCE! THEN A TUMULT OF APPLAUSE EXPLODED!
CLAP! CLAP!
BRAVO!
STUPENDOUS!
THE CURTAINS PARTED AND THE HUNCHBACK STEPPED FORWARD, HIS FACE CHARRED! THEN THE SHAGGY HAIRED MAN CAME OUT, HIS FACE HORRIBLY DISFIGURED BY THE ACID BURNS! THEY BOWED TO THE CHEERING PLAY-GOERS...
CLAP! CLAP!
TWEEEET!
AS THE ENTHUSIASTIC CROWD MOVED TOWARD THE EXITS, BABBLING... TWO AMERICANS REMAINED IN THEIR SEATS...
WELL, ARTHUR? WHAT DID YOU THINK OF IT?
TREMENDOUS, MILES! THE MOST AMAZING DISPLAY OF HORROR I HAVE EVER SEEN!
THE TWO MEN STARED UP AT THE RED-VELVET DRAWN CURTAINS...
I WANTED YOU TO SEE IT! I KNEW YOU'D LIKE IT! DO YOU THINK THEY'D GO FOR IT BACK IN THE UNITED STATES?
ARE PARISIANS ANY DIFFERENT THAN NEW YORKERS, MILES? BROADWAY WOULD GO MAD OVER THIS STUFF!
THERE'S ONLY ONE THING, ARTHUR! THE HORROR EFFECTS OF THE GRAND GUIGNOL ARE ALL CLOSELY GUARDED SECRETS!
I'M SURE WE CAN MAKE A DEAL WITH THEM, MILES! OH-OH! HERE COMES M'SIEU MATIER... THE OWNER!
2

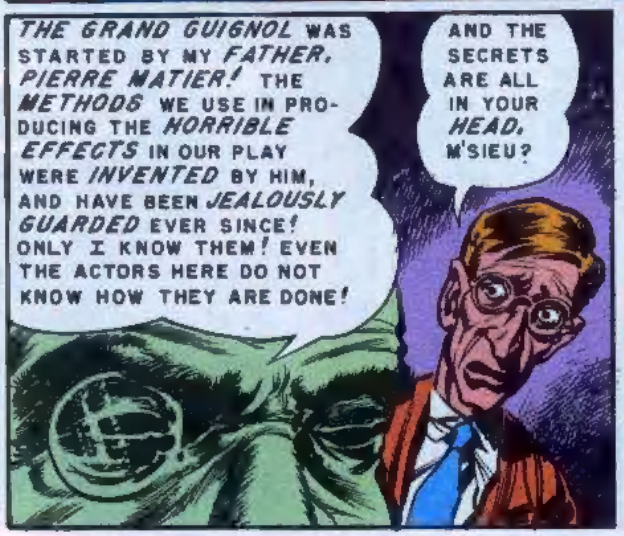
THE TALL, GAUNT, PALE-FACED FRENCHMAN APPOACHED THE TWO AMERICANS...
I BELIEVE YOU ARE THE TWO AMERICANS WHO CALLED ME?
THAT'S RIGHT, M'SIEU MATIER! I AM MILES ANDISH, AND THIS IS ARTHUR MACK!

COME INTO MY OFFICE, GENTLEMEN! YOU SAW THE PERFORMANCE?
YES! WE DID!
IT WAS TERRIFIC!

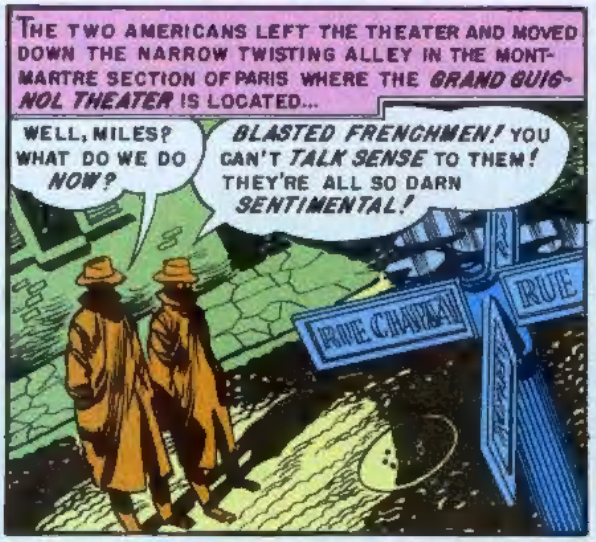
THE THEATER OWNER LED THE TWO MEN INTO A SMALL OFFICE AND MOTIONED THEM TO BE SEATED...
I AM GLAD YOU LIKED IT, GENTLEMEN! NOW...WHAT CAN I DO FOR YOU?
M'SIEU MATIER! WE WOULD LIKE TO PRODUCE THE GRAND GUIGNOL'S PLAYS IN AMERICA!

OH? YOU THINK THE GRAND GUIGNOL WILL BE AS SUCCESSFUL IN AMERICA AS IT IS HERE IN PARIS?
WE'RE SURE OF IT! HORROR IS SWEEPING THE COUNTRY BACK THERE! THEY EVEN HAVE IT IN COMIC BOOKS!

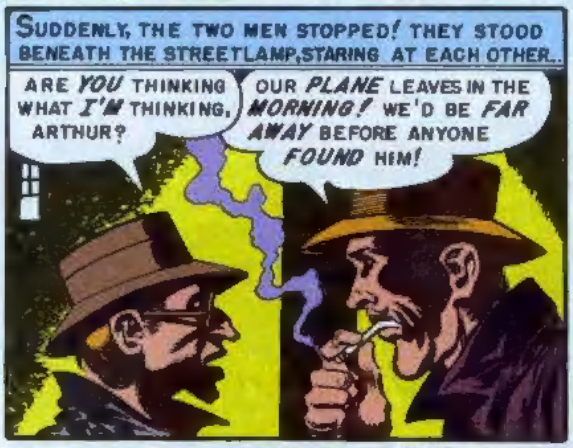
I AM SORRY, GENTLEMEN! I DO NOT THINK WE CAN DO BUSINESS! IT IS IMPOSSIBLE!
WE CAN OFFER YOU A GOOD PRICE, M'SIEU MATIER! WHAT IS YOUR OBJECTION?

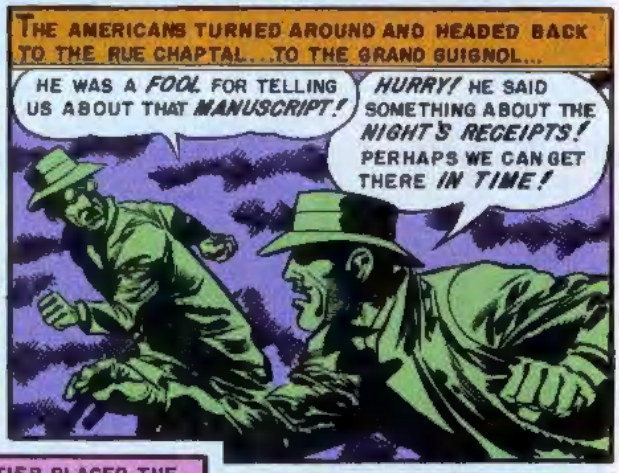

THE GRAND GUIGNOL WAS STARTED BY MY FATHER, PIERRE MATIER! THE METHODS WE USE IN PRODUCING THE HORRIBLE EFFECTS IN OUR PLAY WERE INVENTED BY HIM, AND HAVE BEEN JEALOUSLY GUARDED EVER SINCE! ONLY I KNOW THEM! EVEN THE ACTORS HERE DO NOT KNOW HOW THEY ARE DONE!
AND THE SECRETS ARE ALL IN YOUR HEAD, M'SIEU?

OH, NO! REMEMBERING THEM WOULD BE MUCH TOO DIFFICULT! NO! THEY ARE ALL WRITTEN DOWN IN A MANUSCRIPT WHICH I KEEP IN THAT SAFE! NOW, IF YOU WILL EXCUSE ME, THE NIGHT'S RECEIPTS AWAIT!
ER...YES! WELL! THANK YOU ANYWAY, M'SIEU! I'M SORRY YOU WILL NOT CONSIDER OUR OFFER! BON SOIR!


THE TWO AMERICANS LEFT THE THEATER AND MOVED DOWN THE NARROW TWISTING ALLEY IN THE MONTMARTRE SECTION OF PARIS WHERE THE GRAND GUIGNOL THEATER IS LOCATED...
WELL, MILES? WHAT DO WE DO NOW?
BLASTED FRENCHMEN! YOU CAN'T TALK SENSE TO THEM! THEY'RE ALL SO DARN SENTIMENTAL!
RUE CHAPTAL
RUE

YOU REALLY CAN'T BLAME HIM MILES! IF I WERE IN HIS SHOES, I'D DO THE SAME THING! YOU COULDN'T MAKE ME GIVE UP THOSE SECRETS!
OH, COULDN'T I? WHAT WOULD STOP ME FROM... KILLING YOU FOR THEM?

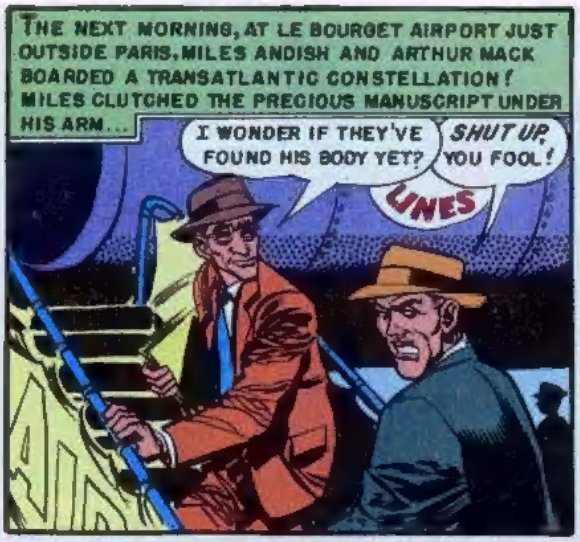

SUDDENLY, THE TWO MEN STOPPED! THEY STOOD BENEATH THE STREETLAMP, STARING AT EACH OTHER...
ARE YOU THINKING WHAT I'M THINKING, ARTHUR?
OUR PLANE LEAVES IN THE MORNING! WE'D BE FAR AWAY BEFORE ANYONE FOUND HIM!


THE AMERICANS TURNED AROUND AND HEADED BACK TO THE RUE CHAPTAL...TO THE GRAND GUIGNOL...
HE WAS A FOOL FOR TELLING US ABOUT THAT MANUSCRIPT!
HURRY! HE SAID SOMETHING ABOUT THE NIGHT'S RECEIPTS! PERHAPS WE CAN GET THERE IN TIME!

OUTSIDE THE OFFICE OF THE GRAND GUIGNOL, MILES AND ARNOLD HESITATED...THEN SLOWLY OPENED THE DOOR! INSIDE, MONSIEUR MATIER WAS STOOPING BEFORE THE SAFE...
THE SAFE... IT'S OPEN!
WE'RE IN LUCK!

MONSIEUR MATIER PLACED THE METAL BOX INTO THE SAFE BESIDE THE VOLUME MARKED 'PIERRE MATIER, METHODS'! TWO SHADOWS MOVED TOWARD HIM! HE TURNED, WIDE-EYED...
YOU!

THE GUN EXPLODED IN HIS FACE! HE SLUMPED TO THE FLOOR! A HAND REACHED OUT AND REMOVED THE MANUSCRIPT FROM THE SAFE...
GOT IT!
LET'S GO!
PIERRE MATIER, METHODS


THE NEXT MORNING, AT LE BOURGET AIRPORT JUST OUTSIDE PARIS, MILES ANDISH AND ARTHUR MACK BOARDED A TRANSATLANTIC CONSTELLATION! MILES CLUTCHED THE PRECIOUS MANUSCRIPT UNDER HIS ARM...
I WONDER IF THEY'VE FOUND HIS BODY YET?
SHUT UP, YOU FOOL!
LINES

AND AS THE GIANT AIRLINER ROSE GENTLY INTO THE SKY ABOVE FRANCE, IN THE OFFICE OF THE GRAND GUIGNOL THEATER IN LE RUE CHAPTAL ...MONTMARTRE...
EEEEEEEEEEK!

WHILE ON THE PLANE...
IT'S ALL HERE, MILES! EVERYTHING! LOOK!
SO THAT'S HOW THEY MAKE THE BLOOD POUR OUT OF THE WOUNDS!

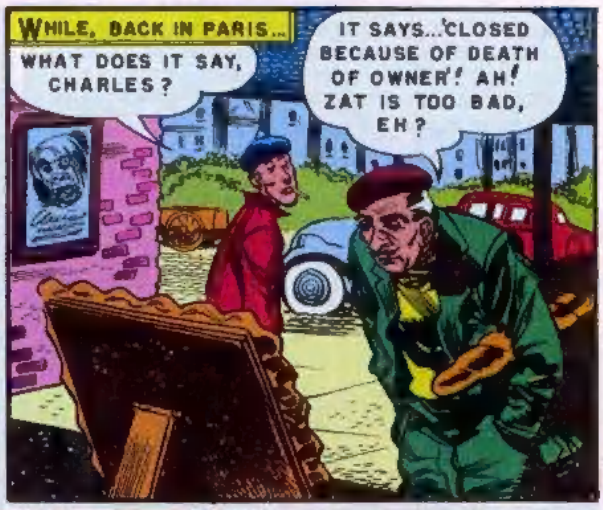
YES! AND LOOK HERE! THE STABBING SCENE! A DETAILED DRAWING OF HOW THE KNIFE IS CONSTRUCTED!
THERE'S THE EYE-GOUGING ACT! WELL ...I'LL BE!

HERE! ON THIS PAGE! THE ACID AND RED-HOT STOVE ILLUSION!
WE'RE SET, ARTHUR! WE'LL KNOCK 'EM DEAD ON BROADWAY!

BUT WE'VE GOT TO KEEP ALL THIS A SECRET, MILES! NO ONE ELSE MUST EVER KNOW HOW THESE HORROR EFFECTS ARE PRODUCED!
WE MUSTN'T TAKE THE CHANCE OF LETTING THIS BOOK OUT OF OUR HANDS!

LISTEN! WE'RE BOTH ACTORS! WE'VE MEMORIZED WHOLE SCRIPTS BEFORE! WE'LL MEMORIZE THIS MANUSCRIPT AND THEN DESTROY IT!
GOOD IDEA! THEN WE WON'T LEAVE OURSELVES OPEN TO THE KIND OF THING POOR M'SIEU MATIER DID!

AND SO, WHEN THE TRANSATLANTIC AIRLINER LANDED AT IDLEWILD AIRPORT IN NEW YORK CITY...
YOU GO TO YOUR HOTEL ROOM AND START MEMORIZING THE MANUSCRIPT, ARTHUR! I'LL SEE ABOUT HIRING A THEATER!
RIGHT! GOOD LUCK!

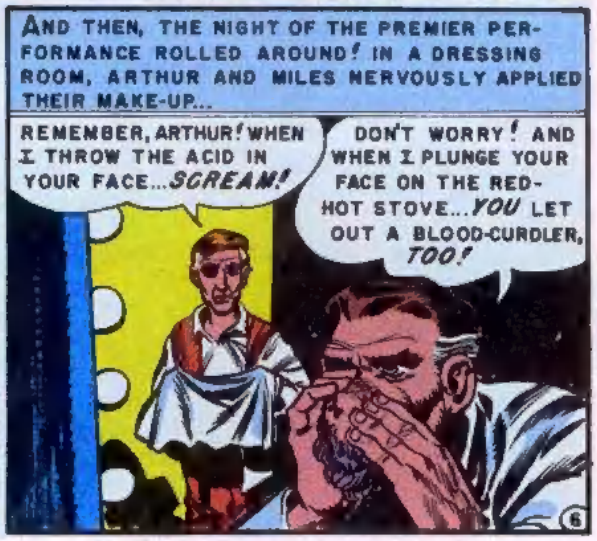

WHILE, BACK IN PARIS...
WHAT DOES IT SAY, CHARLES?
IT SAYS...'CLOSED BECAUSE OF DEATH OF OWNER'! AH! ZAT IS TOO BAD, EH?

A WEEK LATER, IN NEW YORK...
WELL, ARTHUR! I'VE FINISHED MEMORIZING THE MANUSCRIPT, TOO!
GOOD! NOW LET'S DESTROY IT... TOGETHER!

THE MANUSCRIPT OF PIERRE MATIER WAS THROWN INTO THE FIRE, AND THE TWO MEN WATCHED THE LEAPING FLAMES REDUCE IT TO BLACK ASHES...
WELL...THAT DOES IT, ARTHUR! NOW THE GRAND GUIGNOL'S SECRETS ARE OURS ALONE!
AND WE OPEN IN A WEEK!

WHILE IN PARIS, AT THE POLICE MORGUE...
GONE! MATIER'S BODY HAS BEEN STOLEN!
MON DIEU!

IN NEW YORK, ADVANCED PUBLICITY ON THE OPENING OF THE MACK-ANDISH HORROR THEATER BROUGHT LINES OF PEOPLE TO THE BOX OFFICE...
I'VE READ ABOUT THE GRAND GUIGNOL IN PARIS!
THEY SAY THIS WILL BE FAR MORE HORRIBLE!
THEY'RE SOLD OUT FIVE WEEKS IN ADVANCE!


AND THEN, THE NIGHT OF THE PREMIER PERFORMANCE ROLLED AROUND! IN A DRESSING ROOM, ARTHUR AND MILES NERVOUSLY APPLIED THEIR MAKE-UP...
REMEMBER, ARTHUR! WHEN I THROW THE ACID IN YOUR FACE...SCREAM!
DON'T WORRY! AND WHEN I PLUNGE YOUR FACE ON THE RED-HOT STOVE...YOU LET OUT A BLOOD-CURDLER, TOO!

THE AUDIENCE FILLED EVERY AVAILABLE SEAT! STANDING ROOM WAS SOLD OUT! THE THEATER WAS FILLED TO CAPACITY! FINALLY, THE CURTAIN WENT UP AND THE PERFORMANCE BEGAN...

ULP! OUGH! HOW HORRIBLE!

ARTHUR AND MILES STOOD IN THE WINGS, WATCHING... ARTHUR DRESSED AS THE SHAGGY THROTTLER, AND MILES AS THE STOOPED HUNCHBACK...

THE AUDIENCE IS *SHOCKED*, MILES! WE'RE GOING TO BE *A BIG HIT!*

WHY *NOT*? THEY *NEVER EXPECTED* THE EFFECTS TO BE SO *REAL*...

THE STABBING SCENE WAS OVER! THEN CAME THE EYE-GOUGING EFFECT! FINALLY...

THERE'S OUR CUE, ARTHUR!

LET'S GO! GOT THAT BOTTLE WITH THE SECRET FORMULA?

MILES DASHED OUT ONTO THE STAGE! THE AUDIENCE GASPED! ARTHUR FOLLOWED! HE RAN TOWARDS MILES, MENACINGLY...

KEEP AWAY! KEEP AWAY!

I'M GOING TO *CHOKE* YOU, YOU TWISTED LITTLE MONSTER!

THIS IS *ACID* I HAVE IN THIS BOTTLE! IF YOU *TOUCH* ME, I'LL...

WHY, YOU LITTLE...

MILES FLUNG THE SECRET FORMULA INTO ARTHUR'S FACE! ARTHUR SCREAMED...

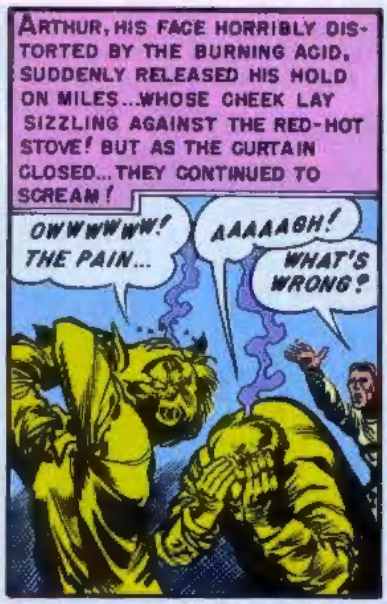
YAAAAA

ARTHUR SHOVED MILES'S FACE DOWN ON THE 'RED-HOT' PROP-STOVE! MILES SQUIRMED, SHRIEKING HYSTERICALLY!

PSST! CUT IT OUT! YOU'RE OVER-ACTING!

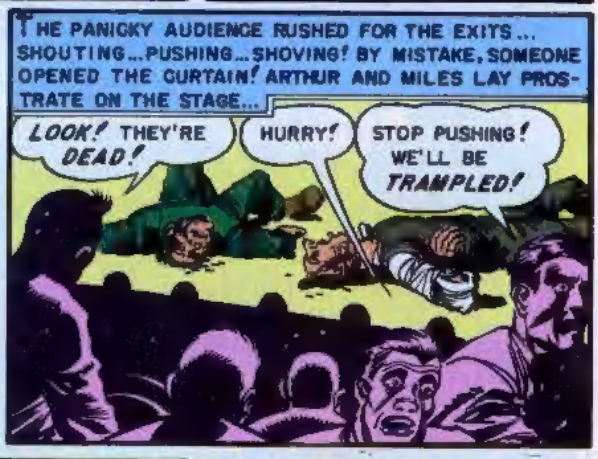
EEEEEEE

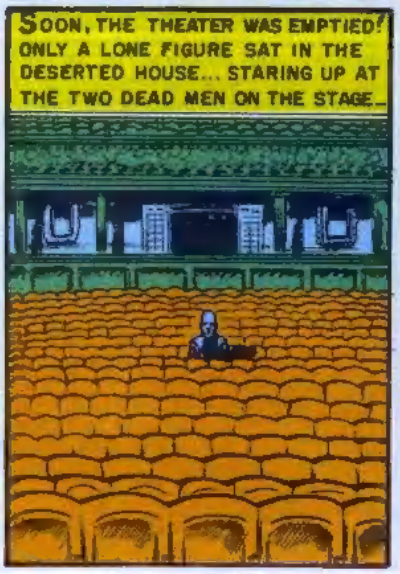
THE AUDIENCE STARED IN HORROR AS THE TWO FIGURES SHRIEKED IN PAIN...
IT...IT LOOKS SO REAL!
I DON'T FEEL SO GOOD!
WAIT! SOMETHING'S WRONG!


ARTHUR, HIS FACE HORRIBLY DISTORTED BY THE BURNING ACID, SUDDENLY RELEASED HIS HOLD ON MILES...WHOSE CHEEK LAY SIZZLING AGAINST THE RED-HOT STOVE! BUT AS THE CURTAIN CLOSED...THEY CONTINUED TO SCREAM!
OWWWWW! THE PAIN...
AAAAAGH! WHAT'S WRONG?

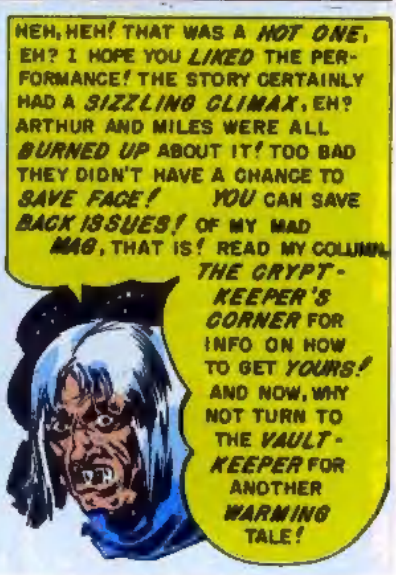
A MEMBER OF THE CAST RUSHED TO THEM! THEY LAY WRITHING ON THE STAGE...
GOOD LORD! THEIR FACES! THEY'RE REALLY BURNED!

THE EXCLAMATION CARRIED THROUGH THE DRAWN CURTAIN TO THE HORRIFIED AUDIENCE OUTSIDE...
THEY'RE DYING!
DID YOU HEAR THAT? IT WAS REAL!
MY GOD!
LET'S GET OUT OF HERE!


THE PANICKY AUDIENCE RUSHED FOR THE EXITS... SHOUTING...PUSHING...SHOVING! BY MISTAKE, SOMEONE OPENED THE CURTAIN! ARTHUR AND MILES LAY PROSTRATE ON THE STAGE...
LOOK! THEY'RE DEAD!
HURRY!
STOP PUSHING! WE'LL BE TRAMPLED!


SOON, THE THEATER WAS EMPTIED! ONLY A LONE FIGURE SAT IN THE DESERTED HOUSE... STARING UP AT THE TWO DEAD MEN ON THE STAGE...

...AND AS WE CLOSE IN, WE SEE THAT THE FIGURE IS SMILING AS HE STARES UP AT THE STAGE WITH GLAZED EYES! IT IS THE CORPSE OF M'SIEU MATIER...
THE END


HEH, HEH! THAT WAS A HOT ONE, EH? I HOPE YOU LIKED THE PERFORMANCE! THE STORY CERTAINLY HAD A SIZZLING CLIMAX, EH? ARTHUR AND MILES WERE ALL BURNED UP ABOUT IT! TOO BAD THEY DIDN'T HAVE A CHANCE TO SAVE FACE! YOU CAN SAVE BACK ISSUES! OF MY MAD MAG, THAT IS! READ MY COLUMN, THE CRYPT-KEEPER'S CORNER FOR INFO ON HOW TO GET YOURS! AND NOW, WHY NOT TURN TO THE VAULT-KEEPER FOR ANOTHER WARMING TALE!

THE VAULT OF HORROR!

MADAM BLUEBEARD

FOR THE BEGINNING OF OUR STORY, LET'S LOOK IN ON A *PATHETIC* SCENE... A *FUNERAL*... IN A CEMETERY. AS THE GROUP OF BLACK-CLAD MOURNERS GATHERED AROUND THE SOBBING WIDOW WATCH... THE COFFIN OF THE RECENTLY DECEASED IS LOWERED INTO THE YAWNING BLACK PIT! *SAD*, ISN'T IT? FEEL *SORRY* FOR THE POOR WIDOW? *DON'T!* NOTICE THE NEAT LINE OF GRAVES BESIDE THE *NEW* ONE? COUNT THEM! YES, THERE ARE *SIX* OTHERS! THIS POOR WOMAN IS BURYING HER *SEVENTH HUSBAND!* IS THERE ANY *WONDER* I'VE CHRISTENED HER *'MADAM BLUEBEARD'*? AFTER ALL, SHE *KILLED* THEM ALL...

OH, YES! THAT'S WHAT EVERYONE *BELIEVES!* THAT TERESA'S SEVEN HUSBANDS ALL DIED *ACCIDENTALLY!* EVEN HER *HUSBANDS* BELIEVED IT... THAT IS, ALL EXCEPT FREDDY... THE ONE THEY'RE BURYING NOW! HE KNOWS DIFFERENT! OR I SHOULD SAY *'KNEW'* DIFFERENT! AH, BUT I'M GETTING AHEAD OF MY STORY...

POOR GIRL!

'POOR'? THAT'S A LAUGH! SHE'S *LOADED!* HER SEVEN HUSBANDS' ESTATES AMOUNT TO A *TIDY SUM!* WHY...

WHY IF I DIDN'T THINK TERESA WAS A *JINX*... I'D *MARRY* HER *MYSELF!* BUT *I'D* PROBABLY END UP LIKE ALL THE *OTHERS*... IN SOME *FREAK ACCIDENT!*

THE *OTHERS?* HOW DID *THEY* DIE?

'WELL, LET'S SEE! *EARL* WAS HER *FIRST!* IT HAPPENED ABOUT THREE MONTHS AFTER THEY WERE MARRIED! EARL HAD PROBABLY FALLEN ASLEEP WHILE FISHING! HIS BOAT DRIFTED INTO THE RAPIDS AND HE WAS KILLED GOING OVER THE FALLS...'

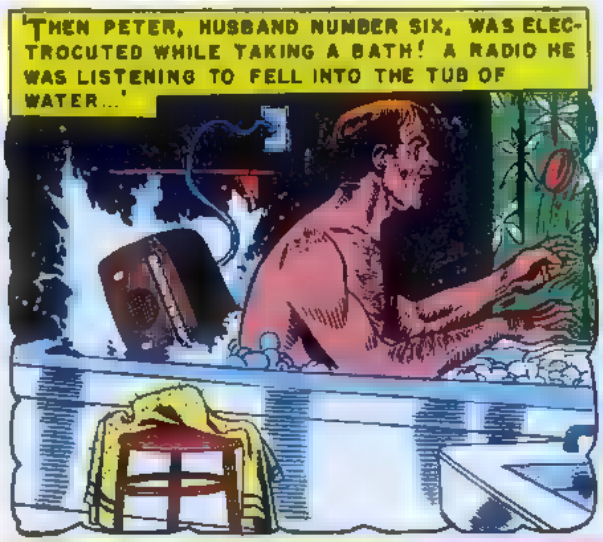
'HOWARD, TERESA'S SECOND, FELL OFF A CLIFF WHILE THEY WERE HONEYMOONING IN A TRAILER...'

EYAAA

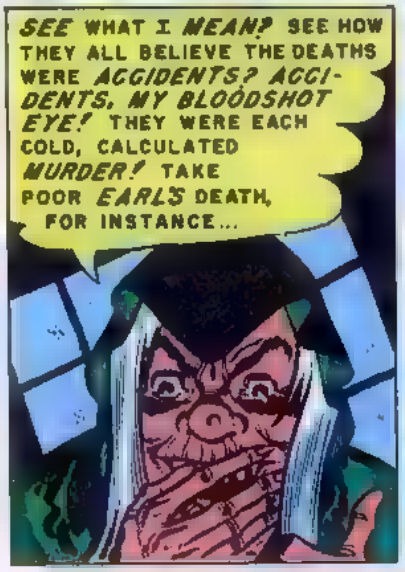
'DOUGLAS, NUMBER THREE, WAS KILLED ON A HUNTING TRIP! HIS GUN EXPLODED IN HIS FACE...'

'NEAL, THE FOURTH, FELL FROM HIS OFFICE WINDOW... *FOURTEEN STORIES!*...

'WARREN, TERESA'S FIFTH, WAS KILLED WHEN THEIR CAR WAS STRUCK BY A TRAIN! TERESA WAS THROWN CLEAR AND SUFFERED ONLY MILD BRUISES...'

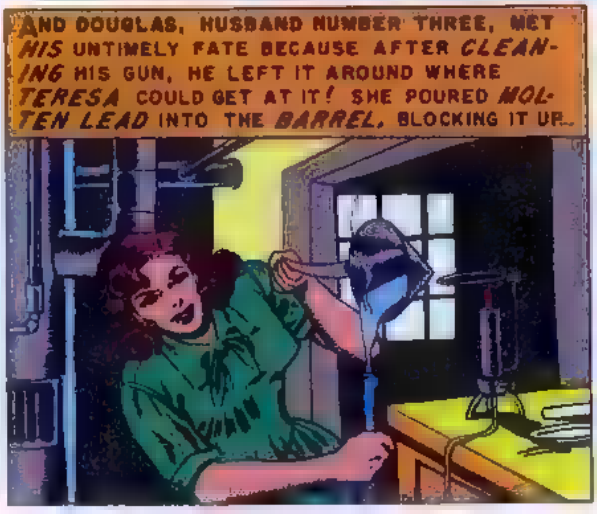

THEN PETER, HUSBAND NUMBER SIX, WAS ELECTROCUTED WHILE TAKING A BATH! A RADIO HE WAS LISTENING TO FELL INTO THE TUB OF WATER...'

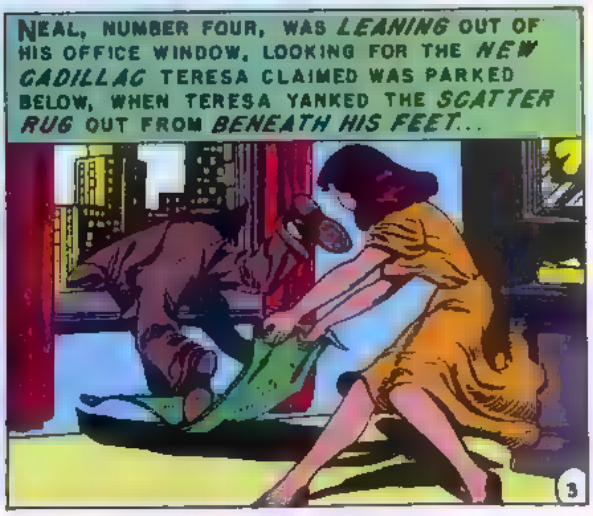
AND, OF COURSE YOU KNOW HOW POOR FREDDY WAS KILLED!
YES! WELL! TERESA'S LEAVING! I GUESS IT'S ALL OVER! COMING?

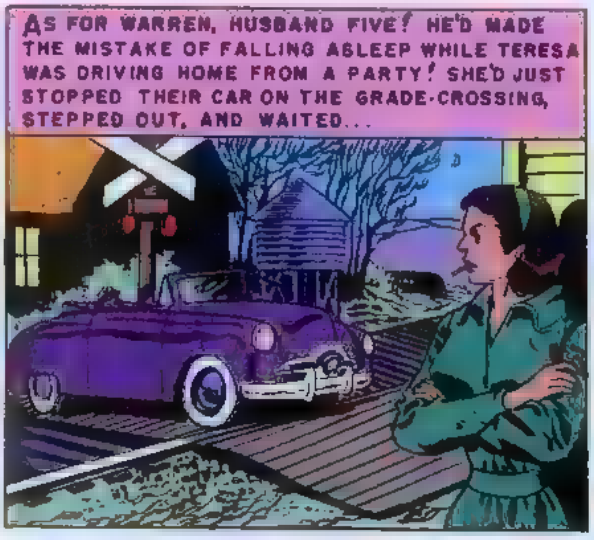

SEE WHAT I MEAN? SEE HOW THEY ALL BELIEVE THE DEATHS WERE ACCIDENTS? ACCIDENTS, MY BLOODSHOT EYE! THEY WERE EACH COLD, CALCULATED MURDER! TAKE POOR EARL'S DEATH, FOR INSTANCE...

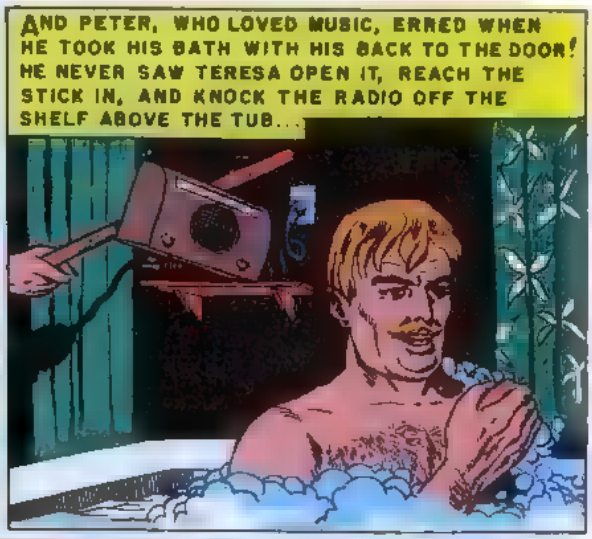
OH, SURE EARL FELL ASLEEP WHILE FISHING! BUT HE KNEW ABOUT THE RAPIDS AND THE FALLS DOWNSTREAM, SO HE WAS VERY CAREFUL TO TIE UP THE BOAT TO AN OVERHANGING BOUGH BEFORE TAKING HIS SNOOZE! ONLY...

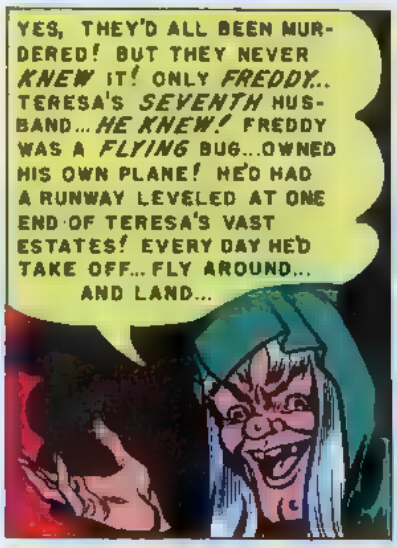
AND AS FOR HOWARD...WELL, HE WAS INSIDE THE TRAILER WHEN TERESA STOPPED IT AT THE CLIFF EDGE! WHEN SHE SCREAMED, HOWARD CAME OUT OF THE TRAILER DOOR FULL-SPEED...


AND DOUGLAS, HUSBAND NUMBER THREE, MET HIS UNTIMELY FATE BECAUSE AFTER CLEANING HIS GUN, HE LEFT IT AROUND WHERE TERESA COULD GET AT IT! SHE POURED MOLTEN LEAD INTO THE BARREL, BLOCKING IT UP...

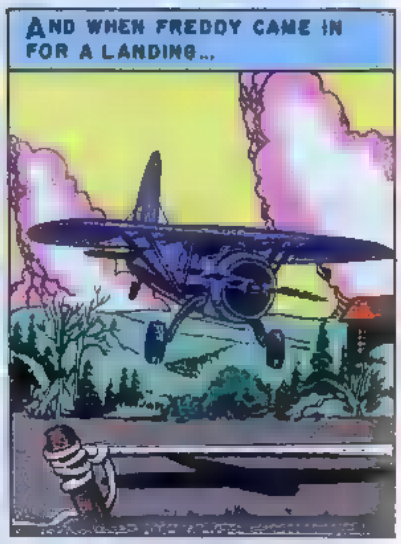

NEAL, NUMBER FOUR, WAS LEANING OUT OF HIS OFFICE WINDOW, LOOKING FOR THE NEW CADILLAC TERESA CLAIMED WAS PARKED BELOW, WHEN TERESA YANKED THE SCATTER RUG OUT FROM BENEATH HIS FEET...

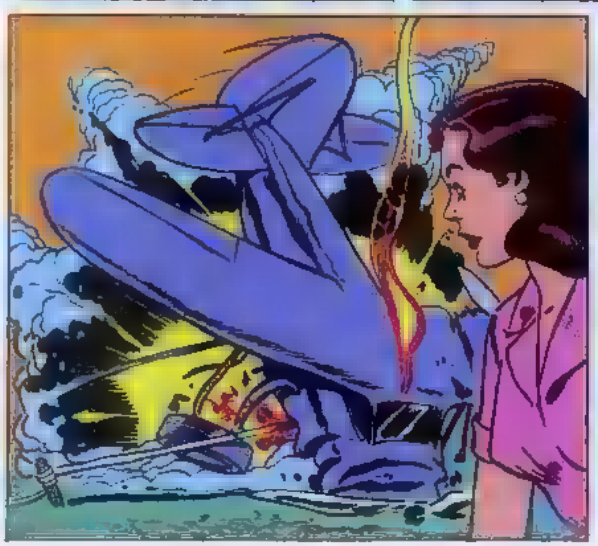

AS FOR WARREN, HUSBAND FIVE! HE'D MADE THE MISTAKE OF FALLING ASLEEP WHILE TERESA WAS DRIVING HOME FROM A PARTY! SHE'D JUST STOPPED THEIR CAR ON THE GRADE-CROSSING, STEPPED OUT, AND WAITED...


AND PETER, WHO LOVED MUSIC, ERRED WHEN HE TOOK HIS BATH WITH HIS BACK TO THE DOOR! HE NEVER SAW TERESA OPEN IT, REACH THE STICK IN, AND KNOCK THE RADIO OFF THE SHELF ABOVE THE TUB...


YES, THEY'D ALL BEEN MURDERED! BUT THEY NEVER *KNEW* IT! ONLY *FREDDY*... TERESA'S *SEVENTH* HUSBAND... *HE KNEW!* FREDDY WAS A *FLYING* BUG...OWNED HIS OWN PLANE! HE'D HAD A RUNWAY LEVELED AT ONE END OF TERESA'S VAST ESTATES! EVERY DAY HE'D TAKE OFF... FLY AROUND... AND LAND...

ONE DAY, WHILE HE WAS *UP*, TERESA STRUNG A STRONG WIRE...TAUGHT...ABOUT TWO FEET HIGH... ACROSS THE RUNWAY...


AND WHEN FREDDY CAME IN FOR A LANDING...



BUT FREDDY WASN'T KILLED IN THE CRASH! WHEN HE CRAWLED FROM THE WRECKAGE, TERESA WAS FORCED TO FINISH THE JOB...
NO, TERESA! NO!

SO YOU *SEE* WHY I'VE CHRISTENED TERESA '*MADAM BLUEBEARD*'? *WHAT'S* THAT YOU SAY? SHE MUST BE NUTS? *OF COURSE SHE'S NUTS!* IT STEMS BACK TO HER CHILDHOOD... WHEN HER FATHER WALKED OUT ON TERESA AND HER MOTHER...

JACK! WHAT WILL WE *LIVE* ON...TERESA AND I?

FOR MY PART YOU CAN *STARVE!* GOODBYE!

TERESA'S MOTHER HAD BEEN EMBITTERED BY HER HUSBAND'S LEAVING! SHE'D BROUGHT UP HER DAUGHTER TO *HATE* MEN...

MEN ARE *BEASTS*, TERESA! THEY'RE NOTHING BUT *ANIMALS!*

YES, MOMMY!

ALL OF HER LIFE SHE'D BEEN TAUGHT...

MONEY! THAT'S ALL THEY'RE GOOD FOR! THE *BEASTS!*

YES, MOTHER!

...UNTIL IT BECAME LOGICAL IN TERESA'S WARPED MIND THAT...

MEN ARE *BEASTS! WILD BEASTS!* WILD BEASTS MUST BE *DESTROYED!*

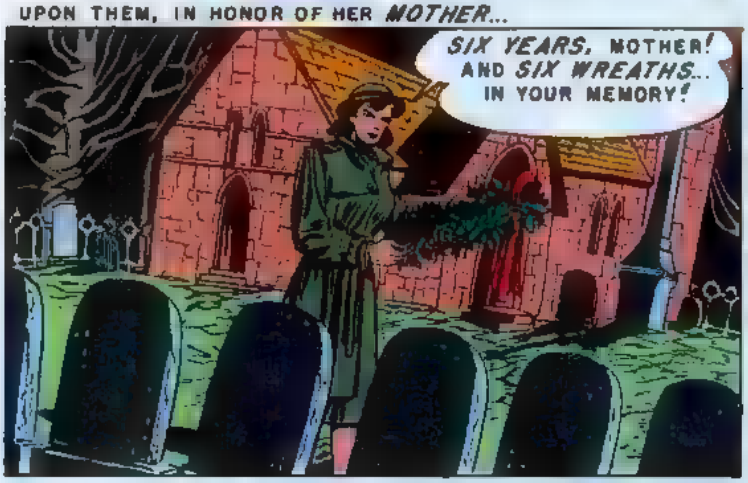
THEN, WHEN TERESA'S MOTHER DIED ON A COLD DAY IN NOVEMBER...

I'LL *AVENGE* YOUR DEATH, MOTHER! YOU SHALL SEE! THEY'LL *PAY* FOR THIS...THE *BEASTS!*

AND SO, ON THE FIRST *ANNIVERSARY* OF HER MOTHER'S *DEATH*, EARL, TERESA'S FIRST *HUSBAND*, LAY IN HIS GRAVE! TERESA CAME AND LAID A *WREATH* ON IT IN HER *MOTHER'S HONOR*...

AND ON THE SECOND ANNIVERSARY OF HER MOTHER'S PASSING, THERE WERE *TWO* GRAVES TO PLACE WREATHS UPON! EARL'S... AND HOWARD, HER SECOND HUSBAND'S...

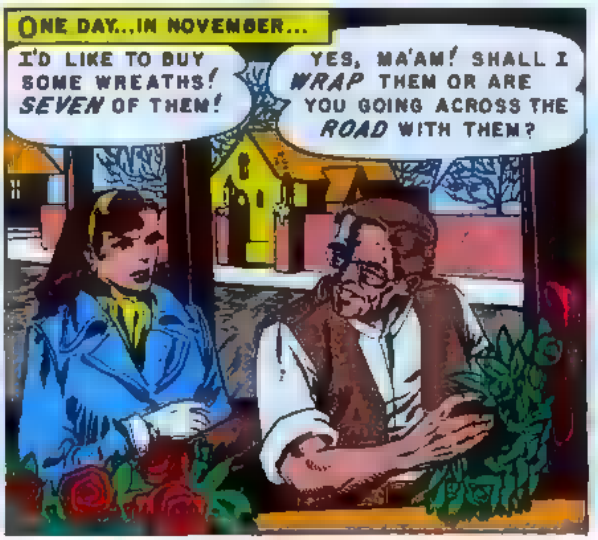
YEAR AFTER YEAR, THE NEAT LITTLE ROW OF GRAVES GREW! AND YEAR AFTER YEAR, TERESA CAME AND PLACED WREATHS UPON THEM, IN HONOR OF HER *MOTHER*...

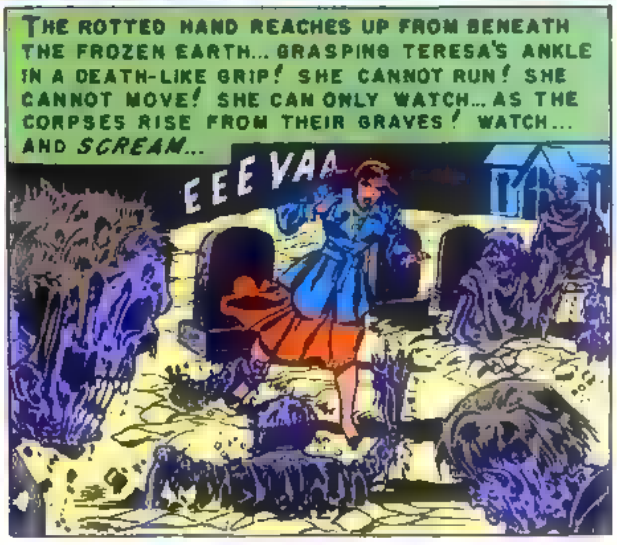


NOW THE BLACK-CLAD MOURNERS ARE FILING OUT OF THE CEMETERY... LEAVING THE SEVENTH GRAVE TO BE FILLED IN... *FREDDY'S GRAVE!*

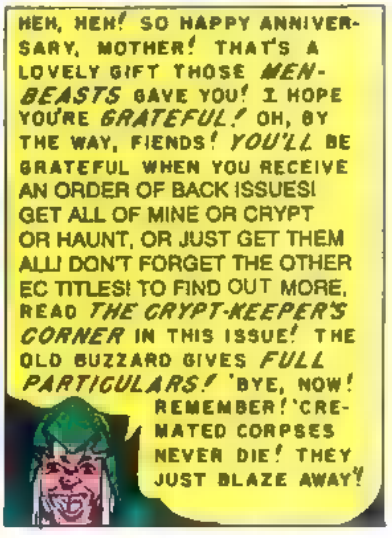
AND SO THE SEVENTH GRAVE IS FILLED IN! THE NEAT LINE LIES SILENT UNDER THE DARKENING SKY! EARL, UNDER THE FIRST! HOWARD, BENEATH THE SECOND! DOUGLAS UNDER THE THIRD MOUND! NEAL BELOW THE FOURTH! WARREN IN THE FIFTH! AND PETER, THE SIXTH! EACH PEACEFUL IN DEATH... EACH *IGNORANT!* AND IN THE FRESH GRAVE... *FREDDY*... WHO *KNOWS!* AND AS THE WIND COMES UP, RUSTLING THROUGH THE BARE TREES, SWEEPING ACROSS THE GRAVE STONES, WHISTLING PAST THE ROW OF SEVEN GRAVES, IT SEEMS TO SOUND LIKE A *WHISPER*... LIKE *SOMEONE WHISPERING*... LIKE *FREDDY*... *TELLING THE OTHERS*...

ONE DAY... IN NOVEMBER...





AND AS TERESA'S SCREAMS END IN A CHOKING COUGH... SILENCE ONCE AGAIN DESCENDS UPON THE GRAVE YARD! THE WIND WHISPERS ACROSS THE CEMETERY, CARESSING THE NEAT LITTLE ROW OF GRAVES! ONLY NOW, THERE ARE *EIGHT* GRAVES INSTEAD OF SEVEN! AND ON THE EIGHTH GRAVE... LIE SEVEN SOILED WREATHS...



President and CEO—Stephen A. Geppi

Publisher—Russ Cochran

I am writing to tell you how great your comics are. Everyday before I go to sleep I have to read one or two stories. I love your comics. You can print my address.

Orlando Garcia — 1729 W Superior, Chicago, IL 60622

I want to know ■ you guys are going to have a fan club. I have ■ favorite episode from "Crypt" series, called "The House of Horrors" (and another one called "What's Cooking?"), and I want to know what issue are you going to put it in so I can purchase it. Are there going to be any special editions like Halloween annuals and ■ that?

Philipe Saralia — ■ Paso, TX

"House of Horror" (singular) ran in CRYPT 5; get our back issue. But it ran originally in HAUNT 1; get our back issue! The house so nice they ran it twice! Inquire after our "Annuals," they collect each title under one cover about five issues a whack. —CK

A couple days ago I was looking at baseball cards and I found a card with the signature at the bottom saying "Jack Davis." Did he draw this card?

Paul O'Leary Needham, MA

Surely did. The card is © 1991 Sunkist Growers. Davis does lots of advertising work. And well! My son, the artist! — CK

■ ■ true that your nick-name ■ "Crypty?" I got ■ out of this book called "Jokes from the Crypt." I would just die and crawl out my grave to get CRYPT.

Can you send me the recipe for ghoulash?

Bryan Kortle — North Beach, MA

Call me Ishmael. (One part ghoul, one part hash.) —CK

I like your comics and I collect your trading cards. I watch your show every Saturday. I also watch your cartoon. I like your story "Loved to Death!!" and "Death of Some Salesmen!". I like the TV version of "People who Live in Brass Hearses" and "Television Terror!".

Tucker Claypool — Oakland, CA

So. How's ■ going ■ the Critical Crypt? Not much here. I'm in school right now, and we're watching a stupid idiotic movie. I don't think anyone's really watching. I think you guys are the best thing that has ever come out of hell. I have a idea for a story: it would rule if you did a "Phantom of the Opera" story.

William Walchle — FT Wayne, IN

I will tread the boards in "Top Billing," VAULT 28. And quit reading comics in class! Even mine!! —CK

You are the coolest dead person alive. I am starting my subscription to your comic. I think The Old Witch is a frat-knocker. The Vault-Keeper is just a pain in the @$$, sometimes. But I liked his story in CRYPT #10. I liked your story "Drawn and Quarted!". Do you like girls? (Not The Old Witch. She's not a girl.) Could you please send me CRYPT #1, ■ or 3? Please, I'm begging you! Please! Best Friends For Life (Or death).

Zac Gale — Saginaw, MI

You're right, The Old Witch hates fraternities. You can get any of my back issues, or any EC title. See the end of this column. —CK

I love your comics. I love them so much I could die. I am dressing up as the Crypt-Keeper and I don't know what to wear. What should I wear?

Dave Hamm — Forney, TX

When I shed my blue robe, I'm partial to a white sport coat and a pink carnation. —CK

I sent you a letter last issue but I didn't get it printed. I really liked Crypt 10, my favorite story was "Drawn and Quartered!". If you print my letter, could you please send me an autographed picture of yourself? Your #1 fan & friend,

Ashley Robinson, 12 — Lockhart, SC

Sorry, got no auto'd photos. See below. —CK

"Drawn and Quartered!", in issue #10, is the best story I've read yet! It BURIED all the others from Vaulty and The Witch. (6 feet underground, that is!) Your best fan,

Frank Reider — Arrow, OK

I love CRYPT comics, the stories are good and scary. One of the stories I liked was "Drawn and Quartered!". The comics have neat pictures, too! Why are the comics called EC comics?

Chris Felber — Mendham, NJ

Seems everyone liked "Drawn"! "EC" stands for "Entertaining Comics." Get out your microscope and you can read it on the cover 'seals.' —CK

Thanx for printing my letter in CRYPT #10, but those last two lines WEREN'T mine. You must have mixed-up my letter and someone else's. I don't even watch "Tales From The Crypt-Keeper" (too juvenile). The guy who really wrote those lines is probably steaming 'cause you didn't give him the credit.

I'm sure the Crypt-Keeper can come up with a suitable punishment for you! Weirdly yours,

Barry McCollum — Alton, IL

You're right; that final paragraph was from the letter of Myron James, Rockville, IN. —CK

Do you know **every** scary story there is to know? I think you do! I want to get the talking Crypt-Keeper doll. I love scary things! Like you!

Justin Winkelman — Soulx City, IA

Like—or as? —CK

I really enjoy reading your comic books, but you should make The Crypt-Keeper tell more stories because all the other people have their own books.

Lisa Michavd — Glastonbury, CT

Make—or let? —CK

Hi! I'm Tony Martinez, a big fan. But you can call me "Skela"-Tony. I am a faithful reader of CRYPT, VAULT and HAUNT. I can read them over and over, and never tire.

By the way, I would love to receive letters from other EC fans from around the world, so please print my address. Any fan can write to me in Spanish, English, Italian, or French. I'll enjoy it a lot, since I like foreign languages.

Thanks for listening, CK, ol' buddy. I have to go brush my fangs, drink a glass of blood, and hop into the coffin. So, sweet nightmares!

Tony Martinez, age 17 — 6041 S California AV, Chicago, IL 60629

Recently I got the [hardback] Complete CRYPT and in several issues it stated that there were photos of the three GhouLunatics. I was writing to see if those photos are still available, and if so, how much do they cost? Your fan,

Adam Owens — address unknown

I have a few questions for you, could you get The V.K. out of your mag? Could Mr. Cochran reprint the 1950s photos of the GhouLunatics? Will the Pre-Trend and New Direction comics, as well as PANIC and MAD, be reprinted in regular format? I would like to have a pen-pal so please print my full address. Your pal,

John Brown — POB 1201, Harriman, TN 37748

That's what it would take to offer photos like Adam Owens (and Ashley Robinson, see above) ask about—reprinting the 1950s photos. Maybe we will. Lotsa other EC comic titles are scheduled for this series, no maybe to it! —CK

I'm collecting your comics. I'm also getting VAULT and HAUNT. I couldn't chose just one, they're all great. Do you like being the Crypt-Keeper? Your scary fan,

Cassie Mootz — Peebles, OH

Beats unemployment! —CK

I just wanted to tell you dudes that the stupid, boring story in issue 7 by The Vault-Keeper, "Voodoo Death!", was dumb. But don't worry, because I think he made up for [redacted] issue 9 [with] "Judy, You're Not Yourself Today!", that story was cool! Please print my address.

Joshua Keane, 12 — 31 Budd ST, Mount Holly, NJ 08060

Best VK can hope for: To break even! —CK

I love your mag! I have seen all of your shows. I am going to get all of the EC CLASSICS. I love CRYPT 8. I like the tale "Scared To Death!".

I looked in my video store. I cannot find the "Tales from the Crypt" movie. Maybe you could tell me where I can get a copy of it. And did you make more than 6 RCP 64-page ECs?

Patrick Burkett — Terre Haute, IN

There were 7 issues of RCP CRYPT, and 5 each of RCP VAULT and HAUNT. All still available. Write for list and prices! Buy, now! Heh, heh! —CK

I just got my copy of CRYPT 9, and I see you printed my letter. And you've done a little editing. And I think you made a mistake! You left [redacted] last name printed. Did you do that on purpose or accident?

And I think [redacted] has a point! Please print my [new] address.

Jason Parker — 6763 Davis RD, Ravenel, SC 29470

I did it [redacted]. On [redacted]. —CK

I am your furry fan that lives in the gutter. I like your comics but they are hard to come by. I'm 11 years old. How old are you? I watch you on tv also. I like you better than the Vault-Keeper and the Old Witch. Could you tell me were I can get a lot of your comics because the stores are always out of comics? What is your phone number? Your fan,

Bobby Harris, III — Baton Rouge, LA

Funny you should ask. You can get our comics from us direct, and our phone number is 1-800-EC-CRYPT. —CK

I am a 14 year old girl and I want to know why there isn't more gore in your comics. I think it's because of the children who can't cope with the sight of blood, of course you don't want to give the poor babies nightmares.

I guess what I'm trying to say is it's ok to put more violence in your comics. If those pansy parents and children can't stand it, let them cry about it. Your readers and real fans are here to support you. Like the saying goes if you can't take the heat stay out of the incinerator.

Seminole Arnold — Ashtabula, OH

Why is it that in most of your tales you never show the faces of the half eaten bodies? I would also like to know if you could make the stories more scary. When I say more scary I mean make them similar to the TV series on HBO. I love your comics and I won't stop reading them.

Leletia Reed — Moreno Vly, CA

TV goes for your viscera. We go for your mind. Besides, we eat the faces first. —CK

I've been doing some research and I found that the first issue of CRYPT was named INTERNATIONAL COMICS until issue #6 when it was renamed INTERNATIONAL CRIME PATROL. At #7 it was shortened to CRIME PATROL up to issue #16. Then at #17 (which is your first issue of CRYPT in this run of reprints) [redacted] was CRYPT OF TERROR for [redacted] issues. At the sacred issue of 20 it became TALES FROM THE CRYPT! My question is will you ever be reprinting these first 16 issues? Festeringly Yours,

Nathaniel Wilson — Pittsburgh, PA

The first, say, 5 eights of this lineage would remind you of period NPP (DC) comics, I think. Not until the advent of Craig & Feldstein would you commence to see any EC-ness, not until the last two issues would you see ME! You can see the CRIME PATROL issues in the WAR AGAINST CRIME/CRIME PATROL set of The Complete EC Library. —CK

I love your stories. I'm 13 years old, but I'm going crazy over CRYPT. I loved your story "Death Must Come!". You ought to make more stories about eternal life.

Two stories from your TV show got me in a CRYPT mood. The first is "Korman's Kalamity." I looked at the office in the program. Is that what your office looks like? The second was "Yellow," starring Kirk Douglas and Dan

Aykroyd. I got a question: Why can't I find it?

If anyone would like to talk about CK, the comics, or "Tales from the Crypt" shows, write me.

Andy Triefenbach — 2277 Parkton Way, Barnhart, MO 63012

We missed the "Korman's" on cable, "Kamen's Kalamity!" from CRYPT 15 will come around soon (or get 64-pg RCP CRYPT #1 right now!) and that's pretty accurate. "Yellow!" ran in SHOCK #1 (back issues available!). —CK

First of all let me say, I am a HUGE fan of CRYPT, VAULT and HAUNT, but your stories are definitely the best. Although I am only 13 years old, I love your comics and I have been reading [them] for about 2 years.

I don't know why the printers put The Old Witch's and The Vault-Keeper's stories in with yours, they don't compare.

You're very handsome, do you get your good looks from your Mummy or from your Dead-y?

Jenni Brinegar — Hot Springs, AR

Buy 64-pg GLAD CRYPT #1 and find out! Heh-heh! —CK

I love your comics. In my opinion, they are the best comics on the market. But as great as your comics are you can make them much better by adding a little more blood and gore to the pictures. The stories are fine, just make the pictures a little more gruesome. If you add just a little more gore the comics may become the best on the market (not just in my opinion). Trust me, I'm your Most Dedicated Fan (I'm not going to say I'm your #1 Fan because that's what all you fans say). The reason why I say I'm your most dedicated fan is because one wall on my room is dedicated to EC comics and the rest of my room looks like a smaller version of the house on the HBO series.

Derek Ramial — Brooklyn, NY

Clean your room! —CK

I love your comics. I really think that OW and VK should get run over by a truck. VK stinks at telling stories. His story in CRYPT #8 really sucked.

"Midnight Snack!" was predictable and not scary at all.

I started collecting EC comics about a year ago. My Dad and I were in Cleveland for a ball game when we walked into a B. Dalton Bookseller, and I started to look for a BATMAN comic when I spotted a CRYPT at the bottom. As far as I'm concerned all ECs should be at the top. I bought it, and have been subscribing ever since. Your tales are the most gruesome, and have the best endings.

Here is CRYPT #10 in order: COVER: Wally Wood did a pretty good job. Is it just me, or does OW look drunk on the cover?

"Drawn and Quartered!": Best story in the book. Jack Davis' art is the best. Man, I sure wouldn't like to be run over by a subway.

"The Borrowed Body!": Worst story in the book. VK really can't tell stories, I'm telling you.

"Indian Burial Mound": No offense, Crypty, but it wasn't that good. You've had better stories in your lifetime. I mean, you could tell that Roy was gonna die.

"Political Pull!": Okay but the end was unrealistic. A body wouldn't even last a month let alone a year in the sea.

Please print my address. If anybody disagrees with my opinions and criticism, please write. Oh, and CK, don't die yet, 'cause I love your work!! Gruesomely yours,

Taras Berezowsky, 11 years old — 300 Woodbridge LN, Ortonville, MI 48462

I love your comic books. I have 4 questions for the Crypt-Keeper. When is your birthday? Do you have any brothers or sisters? Are you married or do you have to dig up a date? Will you be my pen pal?

Scott Ramsay — Vanvouver, BC

See below for birthday information (Got a shovel?) —CK

I found out one of the great mysteries of all time, how old you are. You are 121 years old (in 1994). I have proof to back me up: In GLAD CRYPT #1 during the introduction of the story, "Lower Berth", you explain that a circus came to a small town 80 years ago. A year later you were born, this was said in 1952. So in 1952, you were 79 years old. 42 years later (1994), you are 121 years old (79 + 42 = 121).

Being an artist myself, I think that your artist, Jack Davis, and the Old Hag's, oops, I mean Old Witch's artist, Graham Ingels, are the most talented artists of the EC horror comics. Jack's corpse drawings, and Graham's finely rendered pictures are superb.

My top favorite three tales, in order, are: 1st - "The Chips Are Down" (RCP VAULT #1), 2nd - "Foul Play" (RCP VAULT #), and 3rd - "While The Cat's Away..." (GLAD VAULT #1). The best episodes from "Tales From The Crypt" the series are "Till Death" and "Mournin Mess".

Now come the dreaded questions: On the back of my Crypt card #90 it says the [cover of] CRYPT #46 was to be the cover for a new EC horror comic. What was the comic's title to be, and who was to be the host?

Do you have any posters or T-shirts to sell? Please print my address.

Jeffrey Jones — 4231 Bensalem BLVD, Bensalem, PA 19020

An interesting theory, that math on my age. How long after my telling that tale did EC write it up for the comics? I said "about" 80 years. And, were these human years or dog years?

EC planned a fourth horror title in late 1954, and was going to call it THE CRYPT OF TERROR (which revived the original title of this mag, dropped after the 'first' three issues). I would have been the host (who else?) and the first issue was prepared—and did see print as issue "#46" of CRYPT (actually #30).

Funny you should ask (heh-heh); the back cover of this comic offers a T-shirt ONLY YOU COMICS FAN can get!! —CK

Also available this month are WEIRD SCIENCE and SHOCK. Watch for VAULT, WEIRD FANTASY and TWO-FISTED next month. Don't forget HAUNT, INCREDIBLE SCIENCE FICTION and CRIME. Get them at your local comic book shop or SUBSCRIBE (see our ad in this comic for details)!

BACK ISSUES: CRYPT #1, $3 each (subject to availability). All others up thru issue #3, $1.50 each. Issues #4 and up, $2 each. Add $5 per order ($10 outside US) for S&H.

Write to:
CRYPT
RUSS COCHRAN
POB 469
WEST PLAINS MO 65775

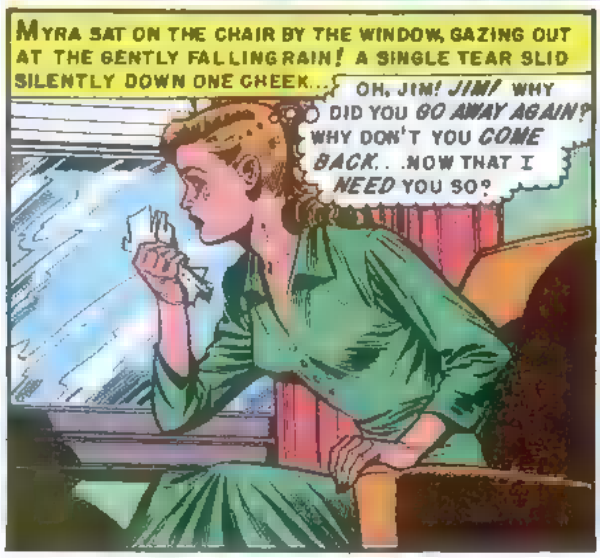
THIS COMIC REPRINTS

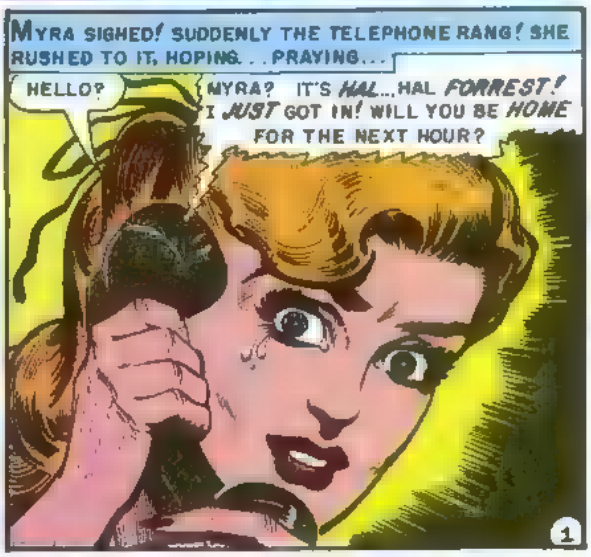
TALES FROM THE CRYPT "#27" (#11, DEC 51/JAN 52)

COVER by Wally Wood	
"Well-Cooked Hams!"	Jack Davis
"Madame Bluebeard"	Joe Orlando
"Return!"	Jack Kamen
"Horror! Head...It Off!"	Graham Ingels

We welcome letters of comment. We cannot promise to acknowledge, publish or answer letters. We edit for clarity, accuracy and length. We automatically withhold street address and zip code unless you clearly state you wish them published. We attempt to acknowledge publication of letters. To do so we need your address on the individual letter.

HERE'S A GHOSTLY YARN! I CALL IT... RETURN!



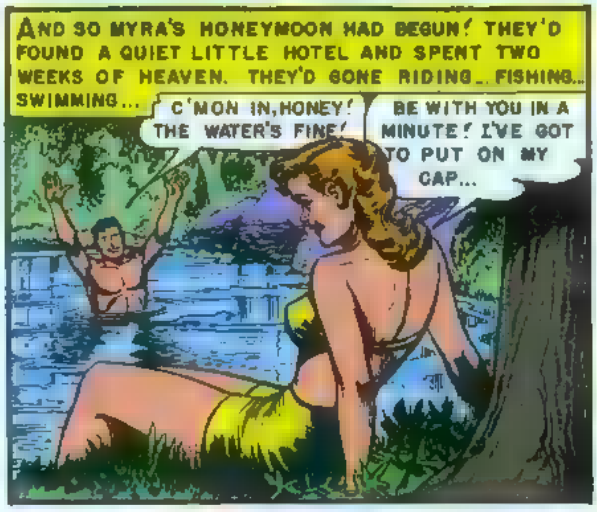


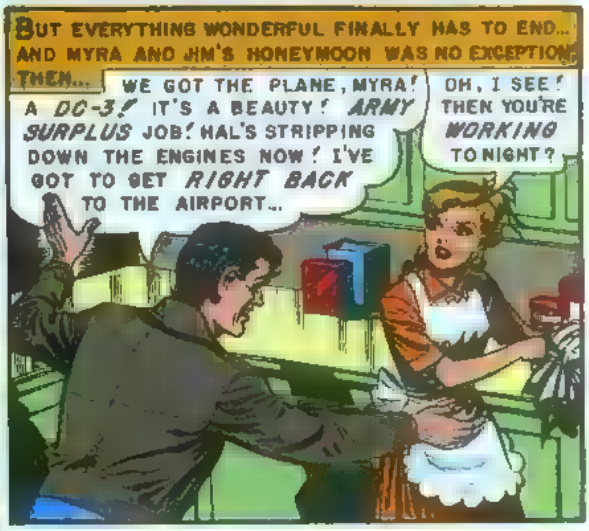
HAL, DEAR! IT'S GOOD TO HEAR YOUR VOICE! IS JIM WITH YOU?
NO, MYRA! I'LL BE OVER... OKAY?
MYRA NODDED SADLY AND HUNG UP! HAL...HAL FORREST, JIM'S PARTNER...WAS HOME... WITHOUT JIM! MYRA FLUNG HERSELF ON THE SOFA AND BEGAN TO SOB...
OH, JIM! JIM! WHERE ARE YOU? WHERE ARE YOU, DARLING?
HAL FORREST HAD BEEN BEST MAN AT JIM AND MYRA'S WEDDING! THAT HAD BEEN OVER EIGHTEEN MONTHS AGO! THE THREE OF THEM HAD DRIVEN UPSTATE TO A JUSTICE OF THE PEACE...
TEN MORE MILES, KIDS! THEN...OOPS! EXCUSE ME!
THE J. P.'S HOME HAD BEEN A LOVELY LITTLE PLACE...THE KIND OF HOUSE MYRA'D READ ABOUT IN BOOKS! IT WAS WHITE SHINGLE, COVERED WITH CLIMBING ROSES AND IVY...
...AND I NOW PRONOUCE YOU MAN AND WIFE!
JIM!
MYRA!
HAL HAD PLANTED THE BEST MAN'S TRADITIONAL KISS ON MYRA'S CHEEK, AND THEN ANNOUNCED...
WELL, KIDS! HAVE A NICE TIME ON YOUR HONEYMOON! I'VE GOT A TRAIN TO CATCH!
TRAIN? YOU? BUT YOUR CAR?
UH-UH! YOU TAKE THE CAR! DRIVE UP SOMEPLACE AND ENJOY YOURSELVES! S'LONG!
SO LONG, HAL! THANKS LOADS, KID!
YOU'RE A DREAM, HAL!
LATER, AS JIM AND MYRA SPED ALONG...
THAT WAS SWEET OF HAL TO LEND US THE CAR, WASN'T IT, JIM?
YEAH! HE'S A SWELL GUY! WE FLEW TOGETHER DURING THE WAR! WE'RE GOING INTO BUSINESS TOGETHER WHEN YOU AND I GET BACK!

WHAT KIND OF BUSINESS?
AIR FREIGHT! HAL'S GOT A LINE ON A DC-3! IF WE CAN SWING IT...

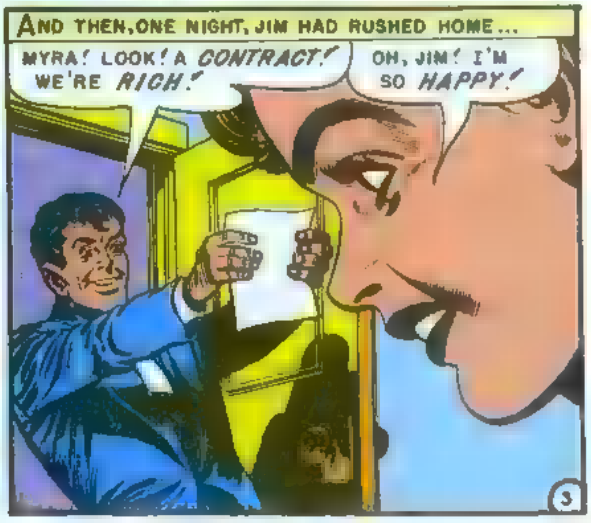
YOU MEAN FLYING?
WHY NOT? THAT'S ALL I KNOW! BESIDES... THERE'S GOOD MONEY IN IT IF YOU OWN YOUR OWN SHIP!

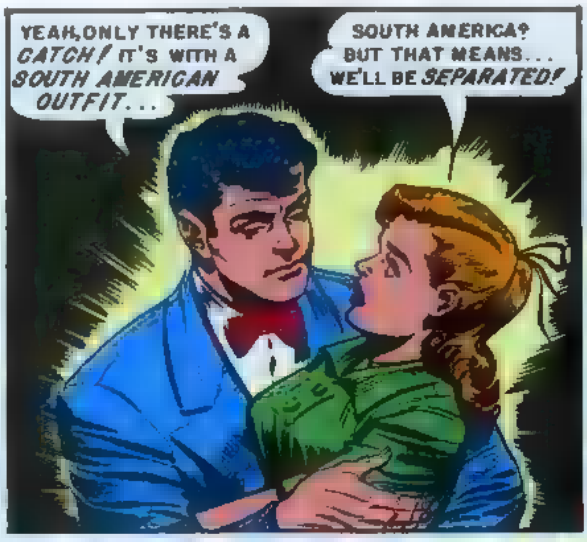
BUT, THAT MEANS WE'LL BE SEPARATED!
ONLY FOR A FEW DAYS AT A TIME, MYRA! WE'RE JUST GOING TO FLY SHORT-HOP STUFF!


AND SO MYRA'S HONEYMOON HAD BEGUN! THEY'D FOUND A QUIET LITTLE HOTEL AND SPENT TWO WEEKS OF HEAVEN. THEY'D GONE RIDING... FISHING... SWIMMING...
C'MON IN, HONEY! THE WATER'S FINE!
BE WITH YOU IN A MINUTE! I'VE GOT TO PUT ON MY CAP...


BUT EVERYTHING WONDERFUL FINALLY HAS TO END... AND MYRA AND JIM'S HONEYMOON WAS NO EXCEPTION THEN...
WE GOT THE PLANE, MYRA! A DC-3! IT'S A BEAUTY! ARMY SURPLUS JOB! HAL'S STRIPPING DOWN THE ENGINES NOW! I'VE GOT TO GET RIGHT BACK TO THE AIRPORT...
OH, I SEE! THEN YOU'RE WORKING TONIGHT?

AFTER THE PLANE WAS RECONDITIONED, HAL AND JIM HAD BEGUN SOLICITING BUSINESS...
ANY LUCK, JIM?
NOT ONE LEAD! BLAST IT! THE BIG LINES HAVE THE AIR-FREIGHT SERVICE ALL SEWED UP!

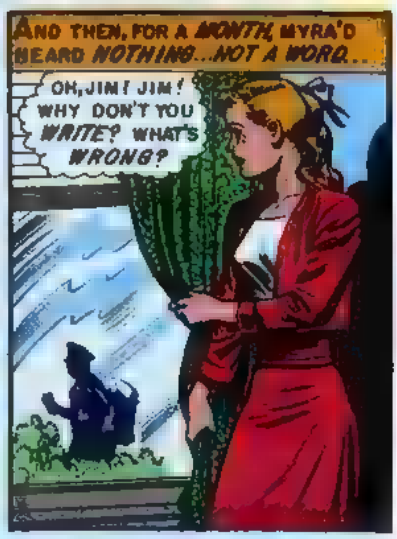

AND THEN, ONE NIGHT, JIM HAD RUSHED HOME...
MYRA! LOOK! A CONTRACT! WE'RE RICH!
OH, JIM! I'M SO HAPPY!

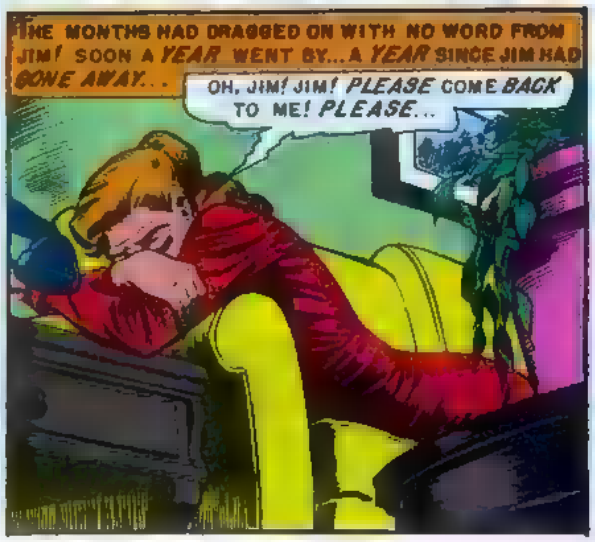

YEAH, ONLY THERE'S A CATCH! IT'S WITH A SOUTH AMERICAN OUTFIT...
SOUTH AMERICA? BUT THAT MEANS... WE'LL BE SEPARATED!

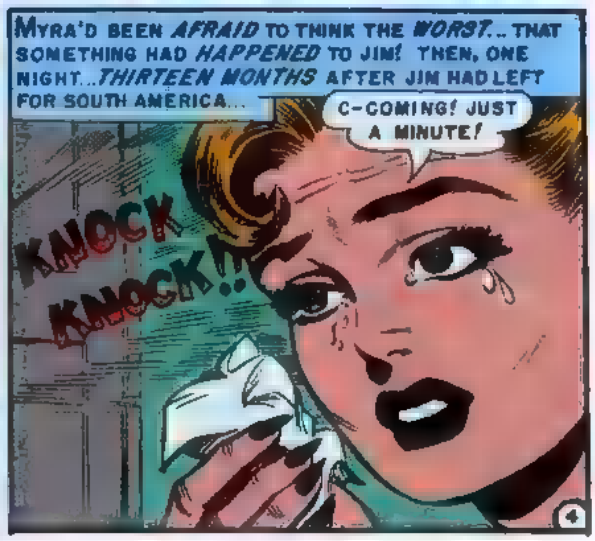
IT'LL ONLY BE FOR A LITTLE WHILE, BABY! JUST AS SOON AS I CAN, I'LL SEND FOR YOU!
PLEASE, JIM! DON'T GO! I'M AFRAID! IT'S SO FAR AWAY...

BUT JIM HAD INSISTED THAT IT WAS THE ONE BREAK THEY'D NEEDED! AND SO, AFTER TWO MONTHS OF MARRIAGE, JIM AND MYRA WERE PARTED...
WRITE TO ME, DARLING!
EVERY DAY, MYRA!

BUT AFTER JIM HAD LEFT, MYRA HAD RECEIVED ONLY ONE LETTER...
IT'S FROM PANAMA! THEY STOPPED THERE TO RE-FUEL!


AND THEN, FOR A MONTH, MYRA'D HEARD NOTHING...NOT A WORD...
OH, JIM! JIM! WHY DON'T YOU WRITE? WHAT'S WRONG?

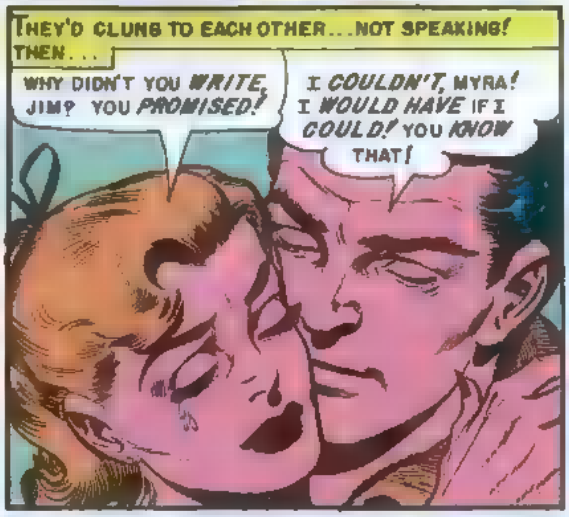

THE MONTHS HAD DRAGGED ON WITH NO WORD FROM JIM! SOON A YEAR WENT BY...A YEAR SINCE JIM HAD GONE AWAY...
OH, JIM! JIM! PLEASE COME BACK TO ME! PLEASE...


MYRA'D BEEN AFRAID TO THINK THE WORST... THAT SOMETHING HAD HAPPENED TO JIM! THEN, ONE NIGHT...THIRTEEN MONTHS AFTER JIM HAD LEFT FOR SOUTH AMERICA...
KNOCK KNOCK!!
C-COMING! JUST A MINUTE!

JIM!
MYRA! DARLING!

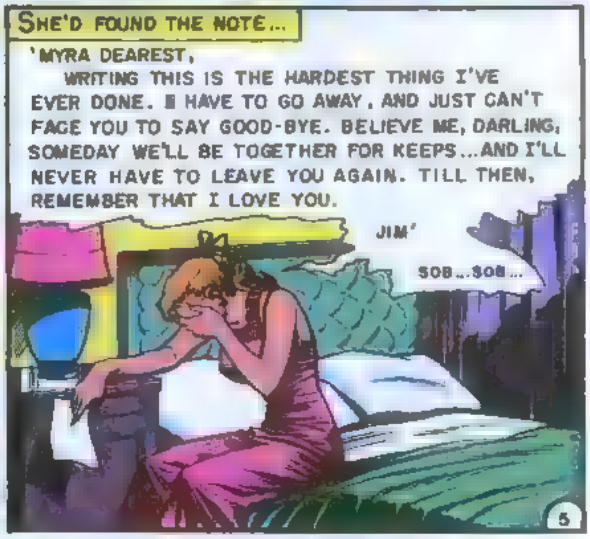
MYRA HAD FLUNG HERSELF INTO JIM'S STRONG ARMS... CRYING UNCONTROLABLY...
I...I WAS AFRAID YOU WERE...
SH-H! HONEY! IT DOESN'T MATTER, NOW!

WE'RE TOGETHER AGAIN! THAT'S ALL THAT MATTERS!
JIM! JIM! IT'S BEEN SO LONG... SO LONG!


THEY'D CLUNG TO EACH OTHER...NOT SPEAKING! THEN...
WHY DIDN'T YOU WRITE, JIM? YOU PROMISED!
I COULDN'T, MYRA! I WOULD HAVE IF I COULD! YOU KNOW THAT!

COME! YOU MUST BE TIRED! OH, DARLING! IT'S SO GOOD TO HAVE YOU HOME!
IT'S GOOD TO BE HOME, MYRA!

AND SO, THEY'D BEEN TOGETHER AGAIN...IN EACH OTHERS' ARMS! BUT MYRA'S JOY WAS SHORT-LIVED... FOR THE NEXT MORNING...
GONE! JIM'S GONE!


SHE'D FOUND THE NOTE...
'MYRA DEAREST,
WRITING THIS IS THE HARDEST THING I'VE EVER DONE. I HAVE TO GO AWAY, AND JUST CAN'T FACE YOU TO SAY GOOD-BYE. BELIEVE ME, DARLING, SOMEDAY WE'LL BE TOGETHER FOR KEEPS...AND I'LL NEVER HAVE TO LEAVE YOU AGAIN. TILL THEN, REMEMBER THAT I LOVE YOU.
JIM'
SOB...SOB...

JIM HAD LEFT NO FORWARDING ADDRESS...JUST THE NOTE! SOON ANOTHER THREE MONTHS HAD SLIPPED AWAY! MYRA'D BEGUN TO FEEL ILL! SHE'D HAD HEADACHES... DIZZY SPELLS...ATTACKS OF NAUSEA.

THE DOCTOR WILL SEE YOU NOW, MA'AM!

THANK YOU!

HER FAMILY PHYSICIAN HAD EXAMINED HER...FINALLY ANNOUNCING...

THE SYMPTOMS YOU DESCRIBE ARE NOT UNCOMMON TO SOMEONE WHO IS GOING TO BECOME A MOTHER, MYRA!

DOCTOR! ARE YOU SURE? WHEN!

SIX MONTHS OR SO! YOU'D BETTER BE TAKING IT EASY!

I WILL, DOCTOR! THANK YOU!

NOW, MYRA LAY SOBBING ON THE COUCH, WAITING FOR HAL FORREST, JIM'S PARTNER! SUDDENLY THE CHIMES SOUNDED! MYRA DRIED HER EYES AND OPENED THE DOOR...

HAL! WHY DID YOU COME *ALONE*? WHY DIDN'T YOU BRING *JIM* BACK WITH YOU?

I *COULDN'T*, MYRA! JIM'S... *DEAD!*

MYRA STARED AT HAL! SHE COULDN'T BELIEVE HER EARS...

NO! NO! IT *CAN'T* BE! I... I'M GOING TO HAVE A *BABY!* WHEN I *SAW* JIM THREE MONTHS AGO...

THREE MONTHS AGO! *IMPOSSIBLE!*

WHAT DO YOU MEAN, '*IMPOSSIBLE*'? *JIM WAS HERE*...HE SPENT THE *NIGHT*...*THREE MONTHS AGO!*

BUT... IT CAN'T *BE!*

OUR PLANE CRACKED UP FOUR HUNDRED MILES SOUTH OF *PANAMA*...IN THE *JUNGLE!* *JIM* WAS *KILLED INSTANTLY!* *IT TOOK ME FIFTEEN MONTHS* TO CRAWL *OUT* OF THAT GOD-FORSAKEN PLACE...BACK TO CIVILIZATION!

THE END

HEH, HEH! I SEE YOU'RE *SURPRISED*. THAT'S THE *SPIRIT!* *WHAT'S* THAT YOU ASK? HOW SHOULD *I* KNOW? ASK *MYRA!* FUNNY THING ABOUT MYRA AND JIM! WHEN THEY FIRST MET, *MYRA* DIDN'T THINK SHE HAD A *GHOST* OF A CHANCE WITH HIM! WELL, NOW IT'S TIME FOR YOU TO BE REVOLTED BY *THE OLD WITCH!* EYES RIGHT!

THE WITCH'S CAULDRON!

NOW THAT YOU'VE HAD YOUR *CHILLING APPETIZERS* FROM MY FELLOW GHOULUNATICS, IT'S TIME FOR ME TO SERVE YOU THE *MAIN* COURSE! SO COME INTO THE *HAUNT OF FEAR!* MY CAULDRON BUBBLES AND GURGLES! IT'S EVIL BREW ■ JUST ABOUT READY! YEP! IT'S *ME* AGAIN! *THE OLD WITCH!* HEE, HEE! *HUNGRY?* GOOD! THEN OPEN YOUR LITTLE LEERING MOUTHS AND I'LL STUFF IN THE *TASTY TERROR-TALE* I CALL...

FAR ACROSS PARIS...AWAY FROM THIS BLOODY SCENE...TWO FIGURES MADE THEIR WAY SLOWLY THROUGH A CROOKED STREET! ONE MAN WAS TALL, WELL-BUILT, BUT CRIPPLED! THE OTHER WAS SHORT AND SQUAT! THE CRIPPLED ONE MOVED PAINFULLY...FIRST STEPPING, THEN DRAGGING HIS HELPLESS CLUB FOOT...

HURRY, MASTER! WE ARE ALMOST THERE!

I AM...GASP...COMING, LOUIS! I CAN'T WALK... AS... FAST AS YOU!

SOON THE STRANGE TWOSOME CAME TO A DARK ALLEY! THEY TURNED IN, STOPPING BEFORE A BATTERED DOOR! THE SMALL ONE KNOCKED ANXIOUSLY! FINALLY, IT CREAKED OPEN...

YES? WHAT *IS* IT?

WE...WE HAVE COME TO BUY... SOME FLOWERS!

THE OBESE MAN BEHIND THE DOOR PEERED OUT AT THEM...

FLOWERS? WHAT *KIND* OF FLOWERS?

WE WANT...SOME *FLEURS-DE-LIS!*

COME IN! I'LL SEE WHAT I CAN *DO!*

YOU ARE MOST *KIND!*

THE FAT MAN CLOSED THE DOOR BEHIND THE TWO VISITORS AND TURNED TO THEM...

WHO... WHO *SENT* YOU HERE?

IT DOES NOT MATTER! THIS IS THE *MARQUIS DE ROCHEMONT!* I AM HIS *SERVANT,* LOUIS!

YOU HAVE... *MONEY?*

YES! WE HAVE THE AMOUNT! YOU WILL HELP HIM TO *FLEE PARIS* AS THEY *SAID* YOU WOULD?

CERTAINLY! I WILL MAKE ALL THE NECESSARY ARRANGEMENTS! BUT FIRST...IF YOU DON'T MIND...THE *MONEY!*

OF COURSE! HERE YOU ARE!

THE FAT ONE COUNTED THE GOLD AND THEN SMILED...

AND YOU ARE?

I AM *HENRI LUGERE*, AT YOUR SERVICE!

LUGERE! YOU ARE THE *DUKE* DE LUGERE?

THAT IS *CORRECT!* I HAVE DEDICATED MYSELF TO HELPING *FELLOW MEMBERS OF MY CLASS ESCAPE THE GUILLOTINE!*

AH! M'SIEU LE DUKE! THIS IS A *NOBLE THING* YOU DO! IF IT WERE NOT FOR MY *CLUB-FOOT*...

YOU WILL BE READY TO LEAVE AT MID-NIGHT! A COACH WILL BE AT THE ALLEYWAY!

I WILL BE READY!

I GO NOW, MASTER, BEFORE I AM MISSED! GOOD LUCK!

AFTER LOUIS, THE MARQUIS DE ROCHEMONT'S SERVANT, LEFT...

HE IS NOT GOING WITH YOU?

THERE IS NO NEED! HE WAS ONLY MY SERVANT! THE GUILLOTINE DOES NOT THIRST FOR *HIS* HEAD! ONLY *MINE*...

THAT NIGHT, A COACH DREW UP TO THE ALLEY-WAY! THE *CLUMP...DRAG...CLUMP...DRAG* FOOTSTEPS OF THE FUGITIVE MARQUIS APPROACHED!

BON VOYAGE, MARQUIS... AND...GOOD LUCK!

GOOD-BYE, M'SIEU LE DUKE! THANK YOU! MAY YOU CONTINUE TO HELP OTHER UNFORTUNATES LIKE ME!

AS THE COACH CLATTERED OFF INTO THE DARK-NESS, HENRI...THE FAT DUKE DE LUGERE... SMILED TO HIMSELF...

DO NOT *WORRY*, M'SIEU LE MARQUIS! I WILL *CONTINUE!* IT *PAYS* ME *WELL*, AND *MY* HEAD REMAINS ON MY *SHOULDERS!*

SOON AFTER, NEAR THE GATES OF PARIS...

WHAT IS THE *MEANING* OF THIS?

IT MEANS, M'SIEU LE MAR-QUIS, THAT YOU ARE *UNDER ARREST* IN THE NAME OF THE *FRENCH REPUBLIC!* TOMORROW, THE *GUILLO-TINE* AWAITS...

SOON, BACK AT THE HOUSE OF HENRI, DUKE DE LUGERE...

YOU ARRESTED HIM, CAPTAIN?

YES, LUGERE! WE STOPPED HIS COACH BEFORE THE WEST GATE! AGAIN, YOUR COOPERATION PROTECTS YOU FROM THE GUILLOTINE!

WELL, CAPTAIN! THAT IS OUR *ARRANGEMENT!* I TURN THEM OVER TO *YOU*... AND SAVE MY *NECK*, EH?

SAVE YOUR NECK IS RIGHT, LUGERE! IF IT WERE *NOT* FOR THIS LITTLE SERVICE YOU PERFORM, *YOUR* HEAD WOULD HAVE ROLLED *LONG* AGO!

AND SO THE NEXT DAY, BEFORE THE JEERING MOB, THE MARQUIS DE ROCHEMONT LIMPED UP THE STEPS OF THE GUILLOTINE...

AND AS THE GLEAMING BLADE WAS HOISTED SKYWARD, THE DRUM BEGAN ITS OMINOUS ROLL...

THE CROWD ROARED AS THE BLADE PLUMETTED DOWNWARD! BUT IN ITS MIDST, ONE MAN DID NOT CHEER! HIS FACE WAS GRIM! IT WAS SHORT, SQUAT LOUIS, THE MARQUIS' SERVANT...

LATER...

CAPTAIN! THERE IS A MAN OUTSIDE! HE HAS COME TO CLAIM THE MARQUIS DE ROCHEMONT'S REMAINS. HE WAS HIS SERVANT!

LET THE BEGGAR TAKE IT! TONIGHT!

AND SO, LATE THAT NIGHT, A CART RUMBLED THROUGH THE DESERTED STREETS OF PARIS CARRYING A MACABRE CARGO... A COFFIN, CONTAINING THE DECAPITATED REMAINS OF THE MARQUIS DE ROCHEMONT! IT WAS DRIVEN BY LOUIS, HIS EVER-FAITHFUL SERVANT...

I WILL SEE THAT YOU HAVE A DECENT BURIAL, MASTER!

THE NEXT DAY, LOUIS STOPPED HENRI LUGERE ON THE STREET...
AH, LOUIS! I AM SORRY! I HEARD THE SAD NEWS!
YES, M'SIEU LE DUKE! MY MASTER...WAS BEHEADED YESTERDAY!
SH-H-H! YOU FOOL! DO NOT CALL ME LE DUKE!
WHY NOT? EVERYONE KNOWS ABOUT YOU! I HAVE LEARNED THE TRUTH... MYSELF!
I...I MUST BE GOING!
WAIT! THERE IS SOMETHING I MUST SHOW YOU! COME!
LOUIS LED HENRI LUGERE TO THE MARKET-PLACE...
HAVE YOU EVER BOUGHT A CHICKEN HERE, M'SIEU LUGERE? HAVE YOU EVER SEEN HOW THEY KILL THEM? LOOK!
UGH! THEY CHOP OFF ITS HEAD!
YES, M'SIEU! NOW WATCH! SEE HOW THE BODY SCURRIES ABOUT WITHOUT ITS HEAD? SEE HOW IT FLAPS ITS WINGS?
MON DIEU! WHAT ARE YOU DRIVING AT?
SOMETIMES A CHICKEN WITH ITS HEAD CHOPPED OFF LIVES FOR MANY HOURS! I KNOW OF A CASE WHERE ONE LIVED FOR ALMOST A MONTH! IT ONLY DIED BECAUSE THE FARMER WHO OWNED IT ALLOWED THE WINDPIPE TO GROW CLOSED!
WHY DO YOU TELL ME THESE THINGS? WHY?
IF A CHICKEN CAN LIVE ON WITH ITS HEAD REMOVED, M'SIEU LUGERE... THEN WHY NOT A HUMAN BEING? EH?
YOU'RE MAD! YOU'RE TRYING TO FRIGHTEN ME! BAH! FOOLISHNESS!

LOUIS SCURRIED OFF, LAUGHING...WHILE HENRI WIPED THE PERSPIRATION FROM HIS FACE! LATER THAT NIGHT, AS HENRI LUGERE SAT IN HIS HOUSE...
THE IDIOT! IF HE THINKS HE CAN SCARE ME, HE'S...
SUDDENLY HENRI HEARD AN UNMISTAKABLE SOUND! FIRST, A CLUMP...THEN SOMETHING DRAGGING... THEN A CLUMP...THEN THE DRAGGING NOISE...
W...WHAT WAS THAT? IT...IT SOUNDED LIKE...FOOTSTEPS! LIKE A MAN...WITH A CLUB-FOOT!
THE CLUMPING, DRAGGING SOUNDS CAME FROM THE ALLEY OUTSIDE! HENRI RUSHED TO THE DOOR...AND SLID THE BOLT CLOSED...
HE...HE'S AFTER ME! THE MARQUIS...
AS HENRI WATCHED HORRIFIED, THE DOORKNOB TURNED SLOWLY! THEN IT RATTLED! SOMEONE OUTSIDE WAS TRYING TO GET IN...
OH, LORD...PROTECT ME! THANK GOD, I BOLTED IT IN TIME!
THEN THE CLUMP...DRAG... CLUMP...DRAG...FADED AWAY DOWN THE ALLEY...
HE...HE'S GOING AWAY! HE...
SUDDENLY, HENRI CURSED...
WHAT A FOOL I AM! A STUPID FOOL! OF COURSE! THAT WAS LOUIS OUT THERE! HE'S TRYING TO FRIGHTEN ME! WHO EVER HEARD OF A BEHEADED MAN LIVING ON...
HENRI FLUNG OPEN THE DOOR AND PEERED OUT! THEN HE GASPED! THE TRACKS IN THE DIRT WERE UNMISTAKABLE! ONE SET WAS THAT OF A SMALL MAN! THE OTHERS WERE STRANGE... AS IF THE PERSON MAKING THEM DRAGGED ONE FOOT...
A...A... CLUB-FOOT! MON DIEU! THEY WERE BOTH HERE!
6

HENRI SPUN AROUND! THE DOOR SLAMMED SHUT BEHIND HIM...

I... I'M *LOCKED OUT!*

THEN IT CAME AGAIN! THOSE SOUNDS! *CLUMP... DRAG ... CLUMP... DRAG!* THEY MOVED TOWARD HENRI FROM THE DARKNESS OF THE ALLEY...

WHO... WHO'S THERE? LOUIS? IS THAT YOU?

A PAIR OF LEGS MOVED INTO THE SQUARE OF LIGHT THAT STREAMED FROM THE LAMP ABOVE THE DOOR! ONE OF THE LEGS HAD A CLUB FOOT! *STEP... DRAG... STEP... DRAG...*

DE ROCHEMONT! NO! IT CAN'T BE!

THE LIGHT CREPT UP THE HOBBLING FIGURE... SLOWLY... TO THE WAIST...

LOUIS? IT'S YOU... ISN'T IT?

TO THE CHEST...

YOU... YOU'RE TRYING TO... *F-FRIGHTEN ME!* AREN'T YOU? *LOUIS?* LOUIS?

AND THEN, THE WHOLE FIGURE MOVED INTO THE LIGHT! *AND IT HAD NO HEAD...*

AAAAAAAAHHH

LOUIS WAS BEHIND THE HORRIBLE THING... GUIDING IT...

JUST A LITTLE FURTHER... JUST A LITTLE!

NO! NO! KEEP AWAY! YAAAAAAAAAAGHH!

HEE, HEE! YES-SIREE! HENRI WAS *SURE SURPRISED!* IN FACT HE LOST HIS HEAD! THEY FOUND HIM THE NEXT MORNING *WITHOUT* IT! HIS BODY WAS WAS LYING BESIDE THE *MARQUIS DE ROCHEMONT'S!* THEY MADE *QUITE A PAIR!* IN FACT IF IT WEREN'T FOR THE MARQUIS' *CLUB-FOOT*, YOU WOULDN'T HAVE BEEN ABLE TO TELL THEM *APART! WHY?* OH, COME, COME! USE YOUR *HEAD!* WHAT HAPPENED TO *HENRI'S?* HOW SHOULD *I* KNOW? WHAT HAPPENED TO *ALL* OF THE HEADS THAT ROLLED DURING 'THE REIGN OF TERROR'? HMMM! SOUNDS LIKE *STORY MATERIAL* THERE! I'LL HAVE TO LOOK *INTO* IT! OH, BY THE WAY! ALL MY BACK ISSUES ARE AVAILABLE! *THE CRYPT-KEEPER'S CORNER* TELLS YOU HOW TO GET YOURS! THAT WINDS IT UP, KIDDIES! I HOPE YOUR HUNGER IS SATISFIED! WE'LL ALL SEE YOU NEXT IN *THE VAULT OF HORROR!* 'BYE FOR NOW!